

submitted that the technology described in the present invention is quite different to that described in Gavin. Firstly, the seals described in Figures 7, 8, 9 and 11 of Gavin have frustoconical components which are flexible enough to deform easily. For example, it is stated at column 6, lines 49-54 inclusive "bell flange 174 is sufficiently flexible so that the bell flange can be folded radially inward in the direction of arrows 176 to provide clearance between flange 174 and wall 102 so that seal 130 can be inserted through opening 132."

In addition, the internal frustoconical sealing skirt 164 is also flexible to allow passage of pipes of slightly different diameters through the sealing skirt. It can be seen from the above-noted figures that the thickness of material used in the sealing skirt is the same as the thickness of the material in the flexible bell 174. It follows, therefore, that this component has to be substantially flexible.

In summary, the seals according to Gavin incorporate either an internal or an external bell/frustoconical component and these components are, flexible.

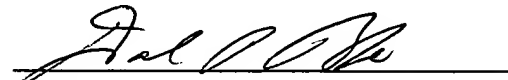
Applicant submits a three-month extension of time to respond to the outstanding Office Action.

Finally, Applicant submits herewith a Request for Continued Examination (RCE) Transmittal.

Credit Card Payment Form PTO-2038 is also enclosed to cover the cost of the extension fee (\$ 920.00) and the filing fee of the RCE (\$ 740.00) for a total charge of \$ 1660.00.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and withdrawal of the final rejection and allowance of the application at an early date are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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